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SUBJECT: SOUTH AFRICA POLITICAL NEWSLETTER FEBRUARY 22-FEBRUARY 26

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¶1. (SBU) This was written in partnership with the Open Source Center's Pretoria Bureau. The newsletter is open to contributions from officers in the Embassy or in the Consulates who wish to highlight political trends. Contact Madeline Seidenstricker or Jonathan Smallridge for more information, or to make contributions. The newsletter also is available on the Political Section's blog, "A View from South Africa," found on intelink.gov.

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International News  
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International Relations Minister Mashabane Visits China

¶2. (SBU) According to a statement released by the Department of International Relations and Cooperation, Minister Maite Nkoana-Mashabane undertook an official visit to the People's Republic of China (PRC) from February 25-26 to hold discussions with Yang Jiechi. The visit takes place within the context of the Strategic Partnership Dialogue between South Africa and China, which was launched on 7 January 2008 as a vehicle to consolidate the bilateral relations between the two countries. The main objectives of the visit are to examine ways to advance the African agenda, to deepen cooperation in the multilateral arena, to coordinate and strengthen business linkages, and to exchange Chinese views on the Asian regional integration. Nkoana-Mashabane will also pay a courtesy call on Vice President Xi Jinping. [Description of source: Department of International Relations and Cooperation in English -- Official government website; URL: <http://www.dfa.gov.za>]

Zuma Condemns Niger Coup

¶3. (SBU) President Jacob Zuma joined the African Union, Economic Community of West African countries, and other African leaders in condemning the coup d'tat by Niger's military on February 18. (DIRCO Briefing, February 19)

Deputy International Relations Minister in Congo

¶4. (SBU) Department of International Relations and Cooperation Deputy Minister Ebrahim Ebrahim attended the SADC Council of Ministers in Congo from February 24-26. South Africa participated in the Southern African Development Community Council (SADC) of Ministers meeting within the context of strengthening SADC. The SADC Council of Ministers session considered the following: regional food security, the establishment of a center for coordination of agricultural research and development, the establishment of the Zambezi Watercourse Commission, and a report from the Finance Committee. (DIRCO Briefing, February 22)

Pro-Democracy Groups Push for Democracy in Swaziland

¶5. (SBU) Pro-democracy groups from several southern African nations gathered in South Africa on February 21 to launch a campaign for

democracy in Swaziland, whose government many consider to be one of the few remaining absolute monarchies in the world. Activists from trade and student unions, civic groups and Swazi opposition parties launched the Swaziland Democracy Campaign. The campaign is designed to seek the removal of restrictions on political parties, the news media and political gatherings. The group also is calling for free, multi-party elections. International Relations Secretary for the Congress of South African Trade Unions (COSATU) Bongani Masuku said these groups are calling for targeted sanctions against Swazi leaders. (Voanews.com, February 22)

#### South Africa Seizes North Korean Arms

16. (SBU) South Africa Government officials claim Pretoria has seized an illicit shipment of North Korean arms bound for the Republic of Congo in violation of United Nations sanctions. The QRepublic of Congo in violation of United Nations sanctions. The government reported the seizure to the UN Security Council. The South African report on Monday February 22 was made to the UN panel monitoring sanctions imposed on North Korea last year following the government's underground nuclear test. The report indicates that spare parts for tanks were seized in November 2009 after a tip-off from a French shipping company that the North Korean vessel was carrying suspicious cargo. Experts from the Council's sanctions panel have been tasked with probing the case. (EWN, February 24)

#### Domestic News

#### Official Announces Details of World Cup Air Defense Plan

17. (SBU) Pretoria News reports that fighter jets and attack helicopters will be on standby during World Cup games in South Africa, ready to be scrambled at a moment's notice, to react to any potential terrorist attacks launched from the air, according to

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Brigadier-General Leslie Lombard, officer commanding Air Force Command Post. The World Cup air defense plan is based on the CIA's Aeronautical Information Publication (AIP), which was compiled after the 9/11 attacks on the World Trade Center. According to Lombard, a strict 50 nautical miles (92km) controlled zone in cities where games are being played will be enforced, with a total exclusion zone of 5 nautical miles (9km) around stadiums. The management of the restricted airspace will be handled by the air force's command post, as a component of the national joint operation command. [Description of source: Pretoria News Online in English -- Website of local daily, privately owned by Independent Newspaper Company; URL: <http://www.pretorianews.co.za/>]

#### Labor Federation COSATU Says Gordhan's Budget "Last Straw" on Alliance Ties

18. (SBU) SABC TV 3 reports that relations in the tripartite alliance have hit a "new low," with labor federation COSATU saying that Finance Minister Pravin Gordhan's budget speech was the "last straw." COSATU said the budget, which it termed unilateral, had failed workers, prompting the federation to organize a series of strikes as part of a rolling mass action campaign beginning in October. According to the report, observers say COSATU's reaction revealed some kind of regret for backing President Zuma. [Description of source: SABC 3 Television in English -- English-language television channel, nominally independent but partially funded by government]

#### Government and Traditional Leaders to Intensify Partnership for Service Delivery

19. (SBU) Zuma has called for a stronger partnership between government and traditional leaders, saying this would ensure sustainable development in rural areas. Speaking at the opening of the National House of Traditional Leaders, the South African leader told reporters that traditional leaders have a critical role to play with regard to rural development. He said Gordhan, in his budget speech, announced that several million dollars would be used this

year for the Comprehensive Rural Development Strategy. He also announced a new grant to support on-site water and sanitation infrastructure as part of the rural housing program. Zuma urged traditional leaders to be part of government's year of action approach to ensure that service delivery challenges are addressed especially in rural areas. (Note: It has become tradition that after the President delivers the State of the Nation Address, and the Minister of Finance delivers the Budget Speech, the President officially opens the National House of Traditional Leaders. End note.) (Buanews, February 23, 2010)

#### Race Tension Hits the Democratic Alliance

¶10. (SBU) Coloured members of the Democratic Alliance (DA) have accused the party's leaders of undermining black and Coloured members. Two DA councilors in Cape Town, Frank Martin and Grant Twigg, have raised concerns about the role of black delegates at the party's forthcoming provincial conference. According to Martin and Twigg, the party "is more lenient towards white transgressors compared to black ones." They cited alleged the party's decision to place Community Safety Minister in the Executive Committee (MEC) Lennit Max on special leave for the last 10 days after allegations surfaced that he had an extramarital affair with a police clerk in 2007. The councilors contrasted this with the leniency shown by Western Cape Premier and party leader Helen Zille in disciplining Western Cape Premier and party leader Helen Zille in disciplining Western Cape party head Theuns Botha, where no action was taken against Botha when he "embarrassed" the party in 2007. Martin and Twigg allege that this lack of action consistency is motivated by race issues within the party. Zille insists that she has treated all candidates equally and based on the facts before her and said it is unfortunate that the race card is played on an issue which has nothing to do with race. (www.iol.co.za February 22, 2010)

#### Gauteng to Empower Women

¶11. (SBU) To reduce reliance on government grants, over 10,000 young women in Gauteng townships will receive training in various skills development programs. MEC for Health and Social Development Qedani Mahlangu reported that together with the Gauteng City Region Academy his department would train young women as auxiliary social workers, shop fitters, air conditioning technicians and lift technicians, giving them the opportunity to earn a decent living. The program will start in Heidelberg, and will later target economically depressed areas of Ekurhuleni, Johannesburg and Pretoria. (Buanews, February 24, 2010)

#### Service Delivery Protests Rock Gauteng

¶12. (SBU) Tensions flared in Sharpeville, South Gauteng after residents accused local political leaders of lining their pockets with millions of dollars meant to upgrade the local stadium and

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other infrastructure projects in area. The residents vowed to protest until Zuma addresses issues of fraud in Gauteng province. Meanwhile, Hartbeespoort residents in Gauteng met February 24 to discuss poor service delivery in their area, following reports that the tap water in the area was not safe and should be boiled first. Community members have threatened to withhold their rates and taxes until service delivery issues solved in the province. (Eyewitness News, February 24, 2010)

#### Prosecuting Chief Refutes Criticism Over His Appointment

¶13. (SBU) National Prosecuting Authority (NPA) head Menzi Simelane has brushed off criticism that he may not be able to execute his duties without fear or favor. His appointment has been criticized by opposition parties following the Ginwala Commission which suggested that Menzi Simelane was "not a fit and proper person" to hold a legal position in the government. Simelane was speaking at the University of Cape Town during a roundtable discussion on whether courts are able to hold public officials to account. He said he will be able to perform his duties without any problems. (SABCNEWS, February 24, 2010)

